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June 9, 1960

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FILE NO. A-14

The Honorable Allen Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

I enclose a copy of a letter which I wrote Senator Fulbright on the subject of his Committee's investigation of the U-2 incident.

It is regrettable that this entire affair has been so widely misunderstood. Some degree of embarrassment and a good deal of adverse "propaganda" was to be expected upon detection (especially on the eve of the Summit), but sophisticated governments all over the world surely understand the realities of this situation. One would have thought, also, that a larger proportion of our press and political leaders would have reacted more maturely.

In any event, I wish to extend to you and your colleagues my warmest congratulations on a truly remarkable achievement.

When, with the passage of time, all of this is placed in proper perspective, I hope that there will be a more general appreciation of how well C.I.A. is serving our nation.

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE)

The Honorable Allen Dulles
Page Two
June 9, 1960

If my war-time friend and colleague, Ting Shelton, is still associated with you, I would appreciate your giving him my greetings.

With best wishes to you personally and to the vital Agency which you direct, I am

Sincerely,

Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

24/166
Encl.

Lewis F. Powell, Jr.
Electric Building
Richmond, Virginia

May 31, 1960

The Honorable J. W. Fulbright
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Fulbright:

A column in today's Richmond Times Dispatch by William S. White prompts me to write this letter. Mr. White expresses an opinion which I share, namely, that our Country is fortunate in having you preside over the portentous hearing on the U-2 incident.

It hardly need be said that it would be calamitous to our national interest if an investigation of this kind were permitted to degenerate into a contest for partisan political advantage. There have already been some disheartening examples where lack of restraint in this respect has created impressions of disunity abroad, and has enabled the Soviet Union to make even greater propaganda by quoting statements from well known Americans which appear to support Khrushchev's attempt to blacken President Eisenhower and the United States for the collapse of the Summit.

In view of these considerations, it is to be hoped that your Committee will adopt an affirmative rather than a negative approach. There is one point in particular which seems to have been largely ignored. This relates to the truly remarkable achievement of those responsible for the U-2 project. I am speaking here, not of the one ill-fated mission on May 1, but of the entire project which goes back some six or seven years. This involves the ingenuity and imagination of those who conceived, planned and implemented the procurement of this unique aircraft. It also includes all of those who, for four years, have been conducting with great skill and courage what is undoubtedly the most daring and successful intelligence operation in the history of the world.

The Central Intelligence Agency and Lockheed Aircraft Corporation certainly merit special commendation. In addition, there must be many others who contributed to the success of this almost incredible achievement, including the pilots whose skill and courage entitle them to rank with our greatest heroes.

It was my privilege during World War II to spend some four years in Air Force Intelligence. At the beginning of the War, American Intelligence was conceded to be one of the weakest elements of our military and diplomatic operations. It is common knowledge that in the European Theater we were compelled to rely primarily on British Intelligence throughout much of the War.

In the intervening years since the War, it has been essential to national survival itself that our Intelligence Service be of the highest possible quality without regard to cost or other risks. As public disclosure of intelligence activities and results is normally unthinkable, there has been a good deal of concern as to whether our intelligence has been adequate to deal with the unprecedented problems of penetrating the Iron Curtain.

But now thoughtful people are reassured. The forced disclosure of the facts with respect to the U-2's success should hearten every American and also our Allies. This success not only answers the concern many have felt as to the adequacy of our intelligence operations, but the inability of the Soviets to prevent these flights during the past four years goes far to explain our defense policy, including continued reliance to a major degree upon manned aircraft. This success should also comfort faint hearted Allies who have been subjected so constantly to Soviet claims of military superiority.

In spite of these solid reasons for genuine satisfaction, most Americans seem to be suffering from an epidemic of self-criticism which is quite unworthy of the character of our people. Indeed, much of the press in this Country has joined with the less responsible press of other nations in denouncing our Government and the responsible officials with indiscriminate broadsides. This has added materially to the damage to American prestige which inevitably resulted in neutralist countries when our intelligence flights were exposed. Happily, few members of Congress have been so shortsighted.

It is, of course, appropriate and desirable for your Committee to ascertain whether, by better advanced planning or more skillful reaction, the State Department could have minimized the inevitable "embarrassment" resulting from the capture of Powers and identifiable wreckage of a U-2 deep within the Soviet Union on the eve of the Summit. But is it not of equal or greater importance to develop a positive and affirmative view towards what has indeed been a most remarkable achievement? Those responsible for this achievement deserve, in my judgment, the highest praise from what should be a

grateful public. They ill deserve, and our Nation suffers from, the carping and indiscriminate criticism which so far has been all too prevalent.

With appreciation for your balanced and correct approach to this delicate problem, I am

Respectfully,

24/7

CC: The Honorable Harry F. Byrd
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

The Honorable A. Willis Robertson
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.